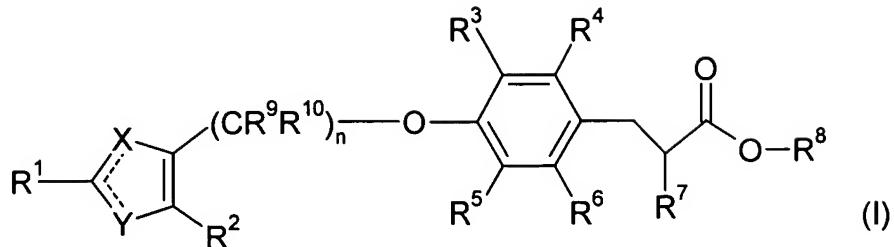


What is claimed is:

1. A compound of formula (I)



wherein

X is N and Y is S; or  
X is S and Y is N;

R¹ is aryl or heteroaryl;

R² is hydrogen, lower-alkyl or fluoro-lower-alkyl;

R³, R⁴, R⁵ and R⁶ independently from each other are selected from hydrogen, hydroxy, lower-alkenyl, halogen, lower-alkyl, fluoro-lower-alkyl, hydroxy-lower-alkyl, lower-alkoxy-lower-alkyl, lower-alkoxy, fluoro-lower-alkoxy, hydroxy-lower-alkoxy, and lower-alkoxy-lower-alkoxy, wherein at least one of R³, R⁴, R⁵ and R⁶ is not hydrogen,

or

R³ and R⁴ are bonded to each other to form a ring together with the carbon atoms to which they are attached, and R³ and R⁴ together are -CH=CH-S-, -S-CH=CH-, -CH=CH-O-, -O-CH=CH-, -CH=CH-CH=CH-, -(CH₂)₃-₅-, -O-(CH₂)₂-₃- or -(CH₂)₂-₃-O-, and R⁵ and R⁶ are as defined above;

R⁷ is lower-alkyl, lower-alkoxy, lower-alkenyl, aryloxy or aryl-lower-alkoxy;

R⁸ is hydrogen or lower-alkyl;

R⁹ and R¹⁰ independently from each other are hydrogen, lower-alkyl, lower-alkenyl, cycloalkyl, phenyl or [1,3]dioxan-2-ethyl;

n is 1, 2 or 3;

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt or a pharmaceutically acceptable ester thereof.

2. The compound according to claim 1, wherein R<sup>7</sup> is lower-alkoxy, lower-alkenyloxy, aryloxy or aryl-lower-alkoxy; R<sup>9</sup> is hydrogen; and R<sup>10</sup> is hydrogen.

3. The compound according to claim 1, wherein X is N and Y is S.

4. The compound according to claim 1, wherein R<sup>1</sup> is aryl.

5. The compound according to claim 4, wherein R<sup>1</sup> is phenyl or phenyl substituted with 1 to 3 substituents independently selected from the group consisting of lower-alkyl, lower-alkoxy, halogen and CF<sub>3</sub>.

6. The compound according to claim 5, wherein R<sup>1</sup> is selected from phenyl, 4-isopropyl-phenyl, 4-chloro-phenyl, 4-trifluoromethyl-phenyl and 3,5-dimethoxy-phenyl.

7. The compound according to claim 1, wherein R<sup>2</sup> is lower-alkyl or hydrogen.

8. The compound according to claim 7, wherein R<sup>2</sup> is methyl or hydrogen.

9. The compound according to claim 1, wherein R<sup>3</sup>, R<sup>4</sup>, R<sup>5</sup> and R<sup>6</sup> independently from each other are selected from hydrogen, halogen, lower-alkyl and lower-alkoxy, wherein one or two of R<sup>3</sup>, R<sup>4</sup>, R<sup>5</sup> and R<sup>6</sup> are not hydrogen, or R<sup>3</sup> and R<sup>4</sup> are bonded to each other to form a ring together with the carbon atoms to which they are attached, and R<sup>3</sup> and R<sup>4</sup> together are -CH=CH-S-, -S-CH=CH-, -(CH<sub>2</sub>)<sub>3-5</sub>-, -CH=CH-CH=CH-, -O-CH=CH- or -O-(CH<sub>2</sub>)<sub>2-3</sub>-, and R<sup>5</sup> and R<sup>6</sup> are hydrogen.

10. The compound according to claim 9, wherein one or two of R<sup>3</sup>, R<sup>4</sup>, R<sup>5</sup> and R<sup>6</sup> independently from each other are selected from halogen, lower-alkyl and lower-alkoxy, and the others are hydrogen.

11. The compound according to claim 10, wherein R<sup>4</sup> is methyl and R<sup>3</sup>, R<sup>5</sup> and R<sup>6</sup> are hydrogen.

12. The compound according to claim 9, wherein R<sup>5</sup> and R<sup>6</sup> are hydrogen; and R<sup>3</sup> and R<sup>4</sup> are bonded to each other to form a ring together with the carbon atoms to which they are attached, and R<sup>3</sup> and R<sup>4</sup> together are -CH=CH-S-, -S-CH=CH-, -(CH<sub>2</sub>)<sub>3-5</sub>-, -CH=CH-CH=CH-, -O-CH=CH-, or -O-(CH<sub>2</sub>)<sub>2-3</sub>-.

13. The compound according to claim 9, wherein R<sup>5</sup> and R<sup>6</sup> are hydrogen; and R<sup>3</sup> and R<sup>4</sup> are bonded to each other to form a ring together with the carbon atoms to which they are attached, and R<sup>3</sup> and R<sup>4</sup> together are -CH=CH-S-, -(CH<sub>2</sub>)<sub>3-5</sub>-, or -CH=CH-CH=CH-.

14. The compound according to claim 1, wherein R<sup>7</sup> is lower-alkyl or lower-alkoxy.

15. The compound according to claim 14, wherein R<sup>7</sup> is lower-alkyl which is ethyl or lower-alkoxy selected from ethoxy and isopropoxy.

16. The compound according to claim 1, wherein R<sup>8</sup> is hydrogen.

17. The compound according to claim 1, wherein n is 1.

18. The compound according to claim 1, wherein n is 2.

19. The compound according to claim 1, wherein n is 3.

20. The compound according to claim 1, wherein R<sup>9</sup> and R<sup>10</sup> independently from each other are hydrogen, lower-alkyl or cycloalkyl.

21. The compound according to claim 20, wherein R<sup>9</sup> and R<sup>10</sup> are hydrogen.

22. The compound according to claim 1 selected from the group consisting of [rac]-2-Ethoxy-3-{4-[2-(5-methyl-2-phenyl-thiazol-4-yl)-ethoxy]-benzo[b]thiophen-7-yl}-propionic acid,  
[rac]-2-Ethoxy-3-{4-[2-(4-isopropyl-phenyl)-thiazol-4-ylmethoxy]-3-methyl-phenyl}-propionic acid,  
[rac]-2-Ethoxy-3-{3-fluoro-4-[2-(4-trifluoromethyl-phenyl)-thiazol-4-ylmethoxy]-phenyl}-propionic acid,

[rac]-2-Ethoxy-3-{2-methyl-4-[2-(5-methyl-2-phenyl-thiazol-4-yl)-ethoxy]-phenyl}-propionic acid,  
[rac]-3-{4-[2-(4-Chloro-phenyl)-thiazol-4-ylmethoxy]-2-methyl-phenyl}-2-ethoxy-propionic acid,  
(2S)-3-{4-[2-(4-Chloro-phenyl)-thiazol-4-ylmethoxy]-2-methyl-phenyl}-2-ethoxy-propionic acid,  
(2S)-3-{2-Chloro-4-[2-(4-chloro-phenyl)-thiazol-4-ylmethoxy]-phenyl}-2-ethoxy-propionic acid, and  
[rac]-2-Ethoxy-3-(3-fluoro-4-{2-[2-(4-trifluoromethyl-phenyl)-thiazol-4-yl]-ethoxy}-phenyl)-propionic acid,  
or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt or a pharmaceutically acceptable ester thereof.

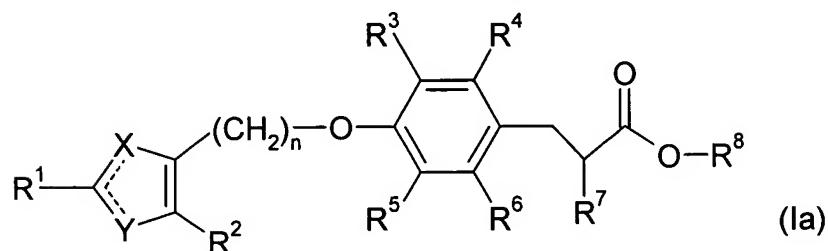
23. The compound according to claim 1 selected from the group consisting of  
[rac]-2-Ethoxy-3-(3-fluoro-4-{3-[2-(4-isopropyl-phenyl)-thiazol-4-yl]-propoxy}-phenyl)-propionic acid;  
[rac]-2-Ethoxy-3-{5-ethoxy-2-fluoro-4-[2-(4-isopropyl-phenyl)-thiazol-4-ylmethoxy]-phenyl}-propionic acid;  
[rac]-3-(4-{2-[2-(3,5-Dimethoxy-phenyl)-5-methyl-thiazol-4-yl]-ethoxy}-benzo[b]thiophen-7-yl)-2-isopropoxy-propionic acid;  
(S)-3-{4-[2-(4-Chloro-phenyl)-thiazol-4-ylmethoxy]-2-fluoro-phenyl}-2-ethoxy-propionic acid;  
2-Ethoxy-3-(2-methyl-4-{1-[4-methyl-2-(4-trifluoromethyl-phenyl)-thiazol-5-yl]-ethoxy}-phenyl)-propionic acid;  
2-Ethoxy-3-(2-methyl-4-{2-methyl-1-[4-methyl-2-(4-trifluoromethyl-phenyl)-thiazol-5-yl]-propoxy}-phenyl)-propionic acid;  
2-(4-{Cyclopropyl-[4-methyl-2-(4-trifluoromethyl-phenyl)-thiazol-5-yl]-methoxy}-2-methyl-benzyl)-butyric acid;  
[rac]-2-Ethoxy-3-{4-[2-(4-trifluoromethyl-phenyl)-thiazol-5-ylmethoxy]-5,6,7,8-tetrahydro-naphthalen-1-yl}-propionic acid; and  
[rac]-2-Ethoxy-3-{4-[4-methyl-2-(4-trifluoromethyl-phenyl)-thiazol-5-ylmethoxy]-naphthalen-1-yl}-propionic acid;  
or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt or a pharmaceutically acceptable ester thereof.

24. A pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt according to claim 1 and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier .

25. A method for the treatment of non-insulin dependent diabetes mellitus in a patient and in need of such treatment, which comprises administering a compound or pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof according to claim 1 to said patient in an amount of from about 1 mg to about 1000 mg per day.

26. The method according to claim 25, wherein said amount administered is from about 1 mg to about 100 mg.

27. A compound of formula (Ia)



wherein

X is N and Y is S; or  
X is S and Y is N;

R<sup>1</sup> is aryl or heteroaryl;

R<sup>2</sup> is hydrogen, lower-alkyl or fluoro-lower-alkyl;

R<sup>3</sup>, R<sup>4</sup>, R<sup>5</sup> and R<sup>6</sup> independently from each other are selected from hydrogen, hydroxy, lower-alkenyl, halogen, lower-alkyl, fluoro-lower-alkyl, hydroxy-lower-alkyl, lower-alkoxy-lower-alkyl, lower-alkoxy, fluoro-lower-alkoxy, hydroxy-lower-alkoxy, and lower-alkoxy-lower-alkoxy, wherein at least one of R<sup>3</sup>, R<sup>4</sup>, R<sup>5</sup> and R<sup>6</sup> is not hydrogen, or

R<sup>3</sup> and R<sup>4</sup> are bonded to each other to form a ring together with the carbon atoms to which they are attached, and R<sup>3</sup> and R<sup>4</sup> together are -CH=CH-S-, -S-CH=CH-, -

CH=CH-O-, -O-CH=CH-, -CH=CH-CH=CH-, -(CH<sub>2</sub>)<sub>3-5</sub>-, -O-(CH<sub>2</sub>)<sub>2-3</sub>- or -(CH<sub>2</sub>)<sub>2-3</sub>-O-, and R<sup>5</sup> and R<sup>6</sup> are as defined above;

R<sup>7</sup> is lower-alkoxy, lower-alkenyloxy, aryloxy or aryl-lower-alkoxy;

R<sup>8</sup> is hydrogen or lower-alkyl;

n is 1, 2 or 3;

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt or a pharmaceutically acceptable ester thereof.